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ABSTRACT

Rural schools have had a traditional role as major vehicles of rural economic development. During the rapid economic changes of the 20th century rural schools supplied the literate migrants who flocked to the cities to become the human capital for urban based expansion. Rural schools also provided the literate farmers who stayed at home and instituted commercialized agriculture. Massive dislocations of people led to a significant depletion of capital in rural areas and a disadvantaged population of "people left behind". Now, research and policy attention is needed to redress inequities between rural and urban schools. The environment in which rural schools function has six points of differentiation from that of the city: (1) rural heterogeneity; (2) patterns of decision making or leadership in the community; (3) broader functions of the school; (4) less institutional separation within the community; (5) marked demographic and economic differences in the population; and (6) distinctive features of the rural economy. Rural schools also differ from their city counterparts as they face special problems with regard to staffing, curriculum, financing, vocational education, and the question of "best" school size. While rural schools should be an objective of rural development, they may also serve to contribute to it in a number of ways as they produce both economic and non-economic benefits to rural inhabitants. (DS)

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EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA:

OBJECT OR INSTRUMENTALITY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Education in 20th century rural America can be discussed from a variety of viewpoints. Particularly relevant seems the contribution rural education has made to overall national economic growth and the concentration of productive capacity and human capital which later led to major inequalities between "rural" and "urban" America. The ubiquitous rural school of the early 20th century produced a largely literate rural population and transformed surplus rural labor into exportable human capital. This predominately literate rural population contributed not only its educated labor but markets for industrial output as well. Boorstin (1973) describes a process in the late 1800's and early 1900's which incorporated rural America into a national "consumption community." The pattern, established early, would continue to gain momentum through the first two-thirds of the century.

Throughout this period education was viewed by most, including a majority of "disadvantaged" as the great equalizer. As described by Bowles and Gintis (1974), education became the 20th century replacement for Horace Greeley's 19th century advice for the young man to go west. This advice--to get an education, which meant also to leave the farm--was the standard advice to the rural youth of the country. The response according to one estimate meant the migration of $1 trillion in human capital from rural to urban areas between 1929 and 1969. Considering that during most of this perioc rural education was paid for almost totally by local property taxes, it is clear that the economic foundations were being laid for what were to become increasing income differentials between rural and urban communities (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1979).

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the rural education system to the economic changes which have occurred during this century. While literate rural migrants were contributing much of the human capital to the urban-based economic expansion, the literate farmers who stayed home served as receptive clients for the commercialization of agriculture. Organizations such as the Cooperative Extension Service have been accorded significant responsibility for the increases in agricultural production over

the past sixty years. However, it is important to recall that the Extension Service came into existence in response to a demand from mostly literate farmers who were receptive to the application of research knowledge to agricultural production. The importance of this factor may be underscored by observing the relative ineffectiveness of the concept in many Third World countries.

At least partially as a consequence of the contribution rural education made to national economic growth, rural schools themselves underwent a rather dramatic transformation in both form and substance, becoming in the process "urbanized" schools (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1977). This transformation meant more than consolidating one room schools into town schools or moving the location of the village high school into an adjoining, somewhat larger rural town. The new urbanized schools were part of a national system of education characterized by an organizational form not generally encountered in rural communities. Although education was still a purpose, "schooling" became the mechanism for providing it.

While the change in form and substance of rural education may not have caused the more accelerated rate of rural to urban migration in the 1950's and early 1960's, it certainly didn't contribute much to slowing it down. Consolidated rural schools were probably not intentionally designed to offer "migration preparation," but intentional or not the experience of schooling was, and is, more apropos to employment in a mass urban labor market than to entrepreneurship in a rural locality.

We are not suggesting a heavy role was played by rural consolidated schools in these massive dislocations--they were only playing a major support role in what was rural development policy, conventional wisdom and economic reality of the time. Because of rapid commercialization of agriculture the economic and population base of rural localities was declining. Agricultural adjustment meant phasing out of rural business and services in response to the declining economic base. A part of national economic growth policy was to stimulate further concentration of investment in urban centers generating employment there and thus creating opportunities for many rural migrants. Rural development policy was in effect a policy of default--increase per capita income in rural areas by reducing the number dividing up the pie. Among the many consequences of this emphasis was the significant depletion of

capital in rural areas and the creation of two glaringly conspicuous disadvantaged populations--the "people left behind" in the rural areas and the "inner city."

In this paper we plan to at least partially address the rural school as both an objective and an instrumentality of rural development. The rural school should be the focus of rural development objectives and investment to redress support inequities existing between rural and urban schools and to provide assistance in overcoming problems of staffing, transportation and the generation of appropriate and effective academic and practical curriculum.

On the other hand, we conclude with some suggestions for roles rural schools can play in contributing to rural development, including producing both economic and non-economic outcomes. Lest some argue that rural development is not an appropriate role for the rural school we would counter that it is not a new and unfamiliar role. The rural school both in its one-room and consolidated forms was a major vehicle of economic development as defined at the time.

A part of the context for considering some potential roles of the rural school in rural development today is the pervasive reverse migration occurring over the past decade. This migration has, and is, changing the opportunity structure of many rural localities (Beale, 1975). Yet another new factor in the equation is the yet undetermined consequences of more expensive and shorter supplies of energy. As is widely noted, the service structure (including and especially schools) of rural America has developed under conditions of relatively cheap energy. Probable responses have significant implications for rural communities and schools.

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[1]HEW testimony before Congress has revealed that only 5% of research dollars, 11% of library and materials funds, 13% of basic vocational aid, 13% of dropout prevention funds and disproportionately low levels of most other federal education funds go to non-metropolitan areas.
Jonathan Sher, PHI DELTA KAPPAN, December, 1978, p. 280

The Rural School as Part of a National System of Schooling

It has become rather commonplace to distinguish between schooling and education (e.g., Illich, 1970). Focusing on the distinction brings into clearer relief the significant support function of the educational (schooling) system to the national economy. As national income and gross national product rose so concomitantly did the educational level of the population. Contributing to the widely held belief in education as a source of human capital and thus a source of economic development is the strong and persistent relationship between educational attainment and income of individuals within the population.[1] Without major exception low income sectors of the population are sectors with low educational levels.

The role of schooling in preparation of students for the world of work is a deeply held value and conviction in American society. In contrast to some other industrialized nations, observers have called attention to the utilitarian purpose of the American educational system.

Quite apart from whatever academic skills are acquired, as a process, schooling trains future employees. The organizational emphasis on punctuality, structuring of time, clear differentiation of function among student, teacher and administration, encouraging a toleration of boredom, producing incentives for rewards having little or no intrinsic value, the specialization of subject matter and support services are all effective means of occupational socialization for future employment in large scale, complex organizations. In the context of the larger society it would be surprising if schools operated any other way. As emphasized in their review of various research studies Bowles and Gintis report that success in school and therefore subsequent occupational success is as much influenced by how well the student learns these organizational lessons as his/her cognitive skills. It will not be argued that realistically this kind of anticipatory socialization is not important, it will be suggested however that other forms of socialization are also important and are practical alternatives especially in

the context of rural schooling.

As Rosenfeld and Sher have pointed out, urbanization of rural schools meant establishing schools with procedures, organization form, curricula, teaching materials, etc., which were similar if not identical to urban and metropolitan schools. Thus the concept of standardized schooling came to be as much a part of rural education as urban education. While schooling undoubtedly better prepared the rural migrant for adjustment to the demands of an urban market place or the campus of major universities, it probably also desensitized students to alternative opportunities for self-employment in areas where an unmet demand for services existed. Jonathan Sher put this phenomenon in quotable form by observing that "often the best way to get a good job as a welder in a small rural labor market is to open your own welding shop." Where such opportunities exist as economically feasible alternatives they apparently go unrecognized by a majority of rural students. This has been reinforced for us by data from our work with rural schools. In the aspiration surveys we have used with students, none listed any form of self-employment except woodcutting as an aspiration. Truck driving might be construed as another exception. Most who were not planning to attend college confined their aspirations to one of the large employers in the area such as the mines or the shoe factories. I'll leave it to those who are much more familiar with the aspiration literature than I to describe how generally this might be true.

The same general conception of schooling prevails also in the area vocational schools, which were established to provide accessible, high quality vocational training for rural students.

Is Rural A Substantive and Important Modifier of Education?

The preceding allusion to characteristics of the smaller labor markets which surround rural schools leads directly to discussion of whether there is a foundation for a separate focus on rural education. My position is that research and policy attention to rural education is not only justifiable on the basis of clearly identifiable factors but also that such an emphasis is overdue. Although rural schools are usually associated with smallness, my contention is that size as a factor influencing educational outcomes has largely been laid to rest and that other distinctive features are more deserving of attention. These will be examined in the context of the rural situation as not only presenting problems deserving of policy initiatives, but equally important as supplying opportunities for educational experiments which may have broader implications.

First, attention will be directed to the socio-economic environment in which rural schools are located to examine whether there is a basis for rural schools deviating from the educational norms and practices of their metropolitan counterparts. Secondly, rural schools will be analyzed in the context of the national system of education to determine whether there are any problems associated with the rural subset of schools which set them apart.

Metro-Non-metro Environmental Differences

With regard to the environment in which rural schools function, at least six highly interrelated factors appear important as points of differentiation: (1) the heterogeneity of rural America; (2) patterns of decision-making and leadership in rural localities; (3) less institutional separation or isolation within the community; (4) broader function of the school within the community; (5) marked demographic and economic differences between rural populations and especially suburban populations; and (6) distinctive features of the rural economy.

To remark on the social, cultural, economic and political diversity of rural America does not immediately separate it from metropolitan areas which

are also characterized by various ethnic, racial and social class neighborhoods. Metropolitan areas are diverse and heterogeneous as well and sound educational policy and practice would attempt to take that diversity into account. The heterogeneity of rural America, however, includes physical separation between dissimilar communities with each reflecting a high degree of convergence of leadership and institutions around certain locality-relevant values and issues. The relative insularity of metropolitan school on anything but the most major public issue is not achievable in the context of the rural locality. Rural schools are usually the largest public institutions in the locality, and thus have difficulty maintaining institutional isolation. School administrators find it difficult to confine school issues to the school and its professional staff--most issues, whether involving an individual student or a bond issue quickly become community issues. Although the above tend to be true of rural communities in general, mostly because of their small size and lack of structural differentiation, the significance of heterogeneity lies in the differences in expectations about schools, teachers and administrators.

The rural school occupies a more prominent place in the life of rural communities than their urban counterparts. Largely because of an absence of alternatives, school events are typically public events attracting an audience larger than only parents of the performing students. Often being "the only game in town," the rural school supplies community recreation, cultural events, opportunities for volunteer activity, contributions to community identity and pride, and to a considerable extent talent and leadership for other non-school-related community activities and events. Much of the opposition to school consolidation by residents of the losing communities has been based on the recognition of the centrality of the school to the life of the community.

Demographically there are clear reasons to claim distinctiveness for rural areas. In terms of income, rural families living in counties not adjacent to metropolitan areas and with no population center of 2,500 or more earn only about three-fifths as much as metropolitan families (Dillman and Tremblay). The probability of falling below the poverty line is nearly 2½ times as great for families living in rural counties in contrast to metropolitan counties. Other quality of life indices related to income, such as adequacy of housing, reflect the lower income of the more impoverished rural localities. Rural

housing quality does not compare with that of metropolitan areas regardless of what measure is used. It is of significance, however, that a higher proportion of nonmetropolitan residents own their own homes, a factor which has significance in terms of the financing of rural education and other local tax supported services. Reflecting the operation of some of the same trends which have characterized rural education (centralization, specialization), dramatic differences exist between rural and metropolitan areas in the availability of professional health care services.

Although rural areas (regardless of what definition is employed) clearly are lower on all indices related to income, there are some other quality of life variables which favor rural localities--crime rates are appreciably lower (although recent evidence is beginning to report a reduction in rate differences) and environmental quality is appreciably higher (although again episodes are occurring with greater frequency in rural areas which make any individual community subject to significant environmental hazards). Although the diversity of rural localities has been emphasized, the differences outlined above are very persistent across the whole of rural and non-metropolitan areas.

Most consistent of reported differences between rural and urban America over the past 30 years has been the educational attainment of the adult population. Prior to World War II differences between rural and urban populations were relatively slight--most rural residents had completed the eighth grade, and college education had not yet become widespread. With rapidly accelerating rural-urban migration, more highly educated rural young adults left, adding to the higher average of the cities, leaving their eighth grade graduate parents behind. Consequently the census of 1950, 1960 and 1970 showed a steadily increasing difference between metropolitan and non-metropolitan educational levels. However, stimulated by a number of factors including extensive reverse migration beginning in the late 1960's, a recent publication by Fratoe (1979) reports that difference between metropolitan and non-metropolitan educational levels had virtually disappeared for the total population. A slight difference remained for farm males and a dramatic difference persisted for the black population--the non-metropolitan black population still remains at about the eighth grade level. The mean for the adult black

population, however, is suppressed by about 25 percent of the adult non-metropolitan black population having less than five years of education.

Despite the diminishing difference in educational attainment of the adult population other educational differences remain. Important among those differences is the fact that the high school drop-out rate (as indicated by the percent of 16-17 year olds not in school) was 9.5 percent for metro areas, 13.6 for non-metro and 15.2 percent for the most rural counties (Dillman and Tremblay). The rural difference, however, can be very misleading. In Missouri, for example, the drop-out rate among rural youth varies from virtually zero in some of the most rural counties to a rate of 10 percent of total high school enrollment per year in other equally rural counties. In rural Missouri the rate tends to be highest in those rural counties having a low proportion of commercial agriculture and a high proportion of labor intensive industry. Again as a reflection of diversity, a recent publication of the Iowa-based organization, PURE (People United for Rural Education), reported that drop-out rates in that state were directly related to size of school--the larger the school the higher the rate of dropping out.

With regard to educational achievement test scores, marked differences exist between the performance of students in highly metropolitan areas and those in extremely rural areas (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1979). The differences are of the magnitude of 10 or more points across several ages and a variety of subject areas where the median is approximately 50 percent.

These pronounced differences, when taken at face value, are probably responsible for at least some of the speculation about the inferiority of rural schools. However, as Bowles and Gintis (1974) have documented, much more of the variance in both educational and occupation success is attributable to the socio-economic status of parents than to school-related factors or to individual student cognitive skills.

As a further consideration, rural schools should not be held responsible for performance differentials between its students and those of suburbia until environmental factors known to influence such performance have become the serious object of equalization (Maynard, 1977). The much greater incidence of rural poverty with its accompanying effects of malnutrition, inadequate health care, absence of intellectually stimulating materials, etc., all contribute importantly to retarding intellectual development and subsequent academic achievement regardless of school size or curriculum.

Although metropolitan areas enjoy a significant advantage over rural areas on most quality of life indicators associated with income, a major study of perceived well being reports that rural people consider themselves to be better off than urban people even when the effect of income is controlled (Campbell, Converse and Rogers, 1976). Dillman (1977) reports that rural people generally rate their communities higher than either suburban or central city residents although when asked to rate specific services such as education, their perceptions of adequacy are lower than for metropolitan residents. Given the recent widespread urban to rural migration, more than passing interest needs to be accorded these subjective assessments of quality of life.

Further comment on unique features of the rural economy having implications for the rural school will be made in the last section of the paper on rural development.

Metropolitan-Non-metropolitan School Differences

Because of various characteristics of the environment in which rural schools operate, the low population density served by rural schools, their size, and the relative isolation from other supporting services, rural schools can be differentiated in the context of the national education system on the basis of certain problems and issues. A recent comprehensive review of public education in sparsely populated areas of the United States supplies documentation in support of special initiatives directed toward the needs and problems of rural education (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1979). That evidence will not be reviewed extensively here but some comments will be directed toward some problems rural schools face with regard to staffing, curriculum, financing, vocational education, transportation and the relative pros and cons of the school size issue.

Staffing: The major input in education and the largest category of school expenditure is the teaching and administrative staff.

Given the salary differentials that exist between rural and urban schools (Muse, 1975; Sher and Rosenfeld, 1979; Missouri Department of Education, 1976) as well as frequently encountered absence of supporting services, professional development opportunities and life style differences, the rural school often has difficulty attracting and maintaining high quality teachers and administrators. In Missouri, for example, the turnover rate among teachers in Class A schools is approximately 22 percent annually in comparison with a turnover

rate of less than 9 percent for AAA schools (Missouri Department of Education, 1976). An accommodation to this problem is that often the teacher in the rural community is a person who has some personal or family connection there (Muse, 1975). This has both potential advantages and disadvantages. It's an advantage in that the teacher knows the community and thus can potentially relate more effectively to the students and their needs. The same familiarity with the community and its social structure may be a disadvantage if it results in "labeling" of students (Hobbs and Hobbs, 1979).

The problem of staffing in rural schools can be regarded as part of the more general problem of attracting professionals in any field to rural communities--a problem that has been widely publicized in regard to health care services for rural communities. In fact, as will be discussed, it may be that some initiatives taken regarding rural health care may have applicability for rural schools.

Important among the staffing issues is the role of administrators, especially with regard to external requirements for operating schools at any level today. Most rural schools are of insufficient size to employ assistant administrators, therefore, the superintendent often assumes personal responsibility for internal management, budget preparation, reporting requirements, community relations, supervision, employment of teachers and, if time remains, educational leadership.

Complying with state and federal reporting requirements supplies an example of externally generated demands on the time of the rural school administrator. In response to our request, the superintendent of a rural high school recently mailed us a list of the forms the school is required to complete. The list was 12 pages long with a timetable for submission of 150 reports. Of the required reports, 106 were required by a federal agency, 39 by the State Department of Education and 5 were required by state statute. Of the 150, 108 were different reports. Forty-[illegible] of the reports were related to School Food Services; 27 to Title I or Title [illegible] SEA; 22 to Special Education or Disadvantaged and Handicapped; 15 to Vocational Education; etc.

Smallness does not provide the small school any particular advantage in relation to reporting requirements. Basically the same reports are required whether the district is small or large. The problem for the small school is not the merit of the reporting requirements--most of them relate to supplying funds for support categories which are significant needs in

most rural communities--but rather the absence of support staff in many small districts to facilitate compliance.

Based on the above information, we proceeded to conduct an informal survey of six rural superintendents. Their estimates of the amount of time they personally spent complying with reporting requirements and budget preparation ranged from 50 to 75 percent of their working hours.

Another important role of the rural school administrator concerns community expectations concerning the involvement of administrators and teachers in school affairs. Again from our informal survey, high school principals reported spending an average of 3 to 4 evenings a week away from home attending school events. The administrators we spoke to were in accord that the community expected them to be there. They felt that in the event "something went wrong" at a school event they should be there to take charge.

Two consequences of these "external" demands on the time of administrators of smaller rural schools come to mind. It is often stated that rural schools are more conservative and reluctant to change. There is some evidence indicating that in terms of personality there is no difference between administrators of small schools and large schools in their change orientation. Insofar as small schools do seem less willing to change, however, the competition for the time of administrators may deserve consideration as a limiting factor. If a majority of time is spent complying with reporting requirements, dealing with discipline and meeting community expectations, then little time is available for "educational leadership."

A second consequence of the same phenomenon concerns the disadvantage of smaller rural schools in keeping abreast of the availability of categorical and exemplary funds and, if they are aware of these, the time that is required to apply for such funds, effectively administer them and comply with reporting requirements. Sher and Rosenfeld (1979) report that rural schools receive 2½ times (per pupil) the amount of funds distributed through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act intended for direct benefit to economically disadvantaged. These funds are allocated on the basis of need and involve less time-consuming application procedures. On the other hand, nonmetropolitan schools receive $3.11 per pupil in federal funds from such categorical programs as vocational education, education for the handicapped, community services and research and development. This is in contrast to $9.09 per pupil received by metropolitan schools in those categories. It is prob-

able that this difference is more attributable to differentials in administrative staff support than to differences in need for such programs.

Curriculum: As mentioned at the outset, a number of factors have contributed to the formation of a national educational system. Mass-produced textbooks, teacher-training curricula, standardized tests and testing procedures, standardized budgeting procedures, standardized school designs, etc., all contribute to the impression of "a school is a school is a school" regardless of where located. Because textbooks are intended for a national market and because both school professionals and students are likely to exercise geographic mobility, it is to be expected that such standardization would be emphasized. However to return to a point made earlier, rural America is simply more idiosyncratic than metropolitan America.

In our study of rural school drop-outs, one of the major contributing factors to students dropping out of school was the lack of perceived relevancy of education, first in terms of the local labor market and secondly in relation to addressing problems and issues in a context with which students were familiar (Hobbs and Hobbs, 1979).

We would not argue that rural schools should de-emphasize a general school curriculum in favor of each community developing its own idiosyncratic curriculum but it is not an either/or question. The curriculum of the rural school can be supplemented with locality relevant materials. That is one of the significant educational advantages of the school in the rural community--it is possible to see and understand the whole community and its interrelationships.

With the constraints of time discussed above, the question becomes one of how such materials can be generated. We would suggest that first thought be given to involving students in producing locally applicable education materials. We have observed students producing slide-tape presentations of local occupations and have been impressed with the quality of the material produced and the apparent educational benefit to them of conceptualizing the task in order to portray it photographically. Other alternatives (again in the context of the small community) might include enlisting the assistance of various community groups or if such material were deemed to be an important addition to the program of the rural school, state or federal resources could be allocated to schools to (for example) employ teachers during the summer to produce such materials for their classes. There is no shortage of possibilities.

Other curriculum issues of particular relevance to the rural community concern offering advanced and more academically specialized courses for students with high educational aspirations and offering alternatives to a college prep curriculum for the frequently encountered majority of rural students who have no plans for post-secondary education. An important justification for consolidation of schools was to assemble a sufficient quantity of students to be able to feasibly offer chemistry, calculus and similar subjects which are important components of a modern curriculum, but with low student demand. Even after consolidation the offering of such courses is difficult if not practically impossible in many rural districts. This again invites experimentation with alternative methodologies--possibilities are many, including shared service arrangements, expanded use of technology such as microprocessors, etc.

With regard to practical educational alternatives for the student whose aspirations do not include college, attention has typically shifted to vocational-technical education.

Vocational education: It has long been held that vocational education was an important part of meeting the needs of rural students. Since usually a lower percentage of rural students either aspire to or can afford to go to college and since opportunities for entering agriculture in the home community are limited, the alternative has been to attempt to provide education to prepare students for other employment. Vocational education, however, is expensive in relation to general education and college prep, and typically beyond the resources of the rural school. In response a system of area vocational schools has been established around the country to provide high quality vocational technical training for rural students. These schools have been filled to near capacity since their establishment within the past 10-15 years. Several problems have, however, surfaced to raise questions about the extent to which these schools have fulfilled the needs that led to their formation.

At a national level, Work in America: A Report of a Special Task Force reported in 1973 that more than 50 percent of graduates of vocational schools took a first job outside the field of skill in which they had been trained. The same report also found that vocationally trained students had no better unemployment record than graduates of general secondary school curriculums. These statistics denigrate the value of vocational-technical education, but do invite further examination of the basis for those findings.

More specifically with respect to rural areas several factors can be cited as limitations of the area vocational school concept. Although rural schools within a region are eligible to send students to an area vocational school on a quota basis, they must still pay tuition for those students This imposes a constraint on many rural schools with limited budgets. In addition to the tuition, they must arrange for transportation as well as scheduling difficulties. A Missouri study of 38 medium-sized high schools (enrollment 500-999) found that students attending high school in a district which was host to an area vocational school were far more likely to be attending the AVS than students attending high schools of similar size but which were not host districts. Fewer than 10 percent of high school students in non-host districts were enrolled in an AVS class (Adams). Another study of factors influencing enrollments of students in area vocational schools found that 74 percent of students enrolled in AVS came from host districts while only 26 percent came from participating districts. Even among participating districts the closer the school was to the AVS, the higher the AVS enrollment of that school. In general the factors most deterrent were distance; tuition; limitation of available programs, especially for women; and limited number of training stations (Lynch, 1974).

Although there are exceptions, an additional limitation of the vocation schools in meeting the needs of rural students and schools is the type of training offered and its frequent lack of relationship to the regional or local labor market. In order to run an economical program, offerings must be limited and a minimum number of students enrolled. In so doing it is virtually assured that in many skill areas the needs of the regional labor market will be saturated creating the necessity for the student to migrate from the region to obtain employment in his/her area of skilled training. In addition, as suggested earlier, vocational training is typically oriented toward providing training geared to the needs of larger employers with emphasis on students becoming effective employees. Again in relation to the rural regional labor market, often the best opportunities for employment are to be found in self-employment. Yet such entrepreneurial training or experience is largely absent from vocational training programs and the offerings of public schools generally.

The main point we wish to emphasize is that the area vocational schools are meeting a popular demand, their classes are generally full and the level of skill training is generally high. However, their existence and focus gen-

erally fits the perspective of rural development as "moving the people out." For students who reject that option the value of the AVS concept becomes somewhat diminished.

A survey of all businesses in two rural counties of Missouri reinforced the above point (Hobbs and Hobbs, 1979). The 327 businesses interviewed were asked if they preferred to hire previously trained employees, such as graduates of the area vocational schools. Only 53 (about 16 percent) of the 327 reported they would. Reasons given for preferring to train their own employees or hiring those with experience in the area were that vocational school graduates were trained with equipment they didn't have, or that they were inadequately trained, or that they had unrealistic (for the local labor market) salary expectations.

The issue regarding vocational training is not that what is being done is wrong--existing programs are obviously filling a need. The question is the need for their extension and consideration of practical, alternative ways of providing for vocational training needs in the context of the rural labor market. More will be said about this in the concluding section.

School size: costs and quality: The relationship between size of school, product, and cost is complex at best. The conclusion from studies of optimum school size in terms of costs is a resounding "it depends." All studies reviewed do conclude that there are economics of scale in the operation of schools whether rural or urban, but considerable differences exist among them concerning the variables taken into account, whether there are U-shaped cost curves, whether the schools serve sparsely or densely populated areas, etc.

In an Iowa study of 377 high schools, Cohn found that the optimum size high school, using the Iowa Test of Educational Development scores as a quality control, was 1,500 students. Riew (1966), who completed a similar study in Wisconsin, reported cost reductions, holding other factors constant (except transportation) until a size of 1,675 was obtained. Osburn, in a Missouri study, included transportation as a cost in a study of economies of scale of both rural and urban schools. He found most economies to have been obtained at about the same level as Cohn and Riew. However with the inclusion of transportation costs, Osburn (1970) found that going from a school of size 200 to one of 2,245 resulted in a savings of $47 per pupil. In the Riew study a savings of over $200 per pupil was achieved across that size range excluding transportation. In another Missouri study, Loveland (1971) found very different

results. With the inclusion of transportation costs and using standardized test scores as a quality control measure, he found that for the rural school serving an area with a student population density of less than one per mile that the "optimum size" was reached at 300 enrollment. For urban and metropolitan schools, economies of size were achieved through 2,000 students. U-shaped cost curves applied to both sets of schools.

Similarly White and Tweeten (1973) found that student population density was a major factor determining optimum size. With a student density of .6 per square mile, minimum costs were achieved at 300 student enrollment whereas for a density of 3.0 a school size of 1,075 was required to reach the minimum cost per student. White and Tweeten (1973) conclude that in sparsely populated areas school districts cannot expand in size to take full advantage of economies in instruction because transportation diseconomies become an overriding factor.

In a more recent study Holland and Baritelle (1975) applied linear programming modeling to 9 school districts within a single county--8 having both a high school and elementary school. None of the schools had a combined enrollment of more than 500. Their analysis included 8 different models allowing school district boundaries to change, projecting enrollment differences, and including different fuel costs including a 200 percent increase over their 1972 data. Their conclusion was that the present size and location of schools was nearly optimal. Under conditions of the model where realignment of boundaries and schools was made to minimize costs, a savings of about 1 percent of total combined operating budget of the schools was achieved. As they conclude ". . . the energy crisis is on the side of the small, rural school. . . .Plans for eliminating small rural schools as a move toward more efficient use of resources may prove to be very shortsighted" (p. 574).

A study of British Columbian schools reports the minimum point of the implied average cost curve occurs for a school size of 520 pupils but that school district economies are achieved far beyond that (Wales, 1973). The author concludes that the major cost savings associated with larger schools are attributable to higher average student-teacher ratios achievable in the larger school. They caution against the dubious educational consequences as a result of choosing this cost-savings measure.

A recent Australian study using individual schools as the unit of analysis in a rural study found that most economies in instructional expenditure

per pupil were achieved by the 100 student size (Hind, 1977). A similar relationship existed for maintenance expenditures. Hind reports, in addition, that for instructional expenditures diseconomies set in at the 600 pupil enrollment level due to an administrative structure with a higher labor component beyond that enrollment level.

A conclusion from these studies is that there are indeed economies of scale associated with the operation of public schools but that these economies are dramatically influenced by various conditions, especially low student density. Where student density is less than 1 student per mile, it would appear that a school with an enrollment of no more than 300 exhausts most economies of size. That finding comes from studies conducted during the early 1970's at a time when transportation costs represented a smaller proportion of school operating costs.

Quality: Perhaps the most difficult to measure of the education variables is the quality of the inputs. Variables frequently used are assumed to be related to higher education quality, e.g., higher teacher salaries, more degrees possessed by the teacher, lower teacher turnover, the presence of various educational specialists, etc. For many of these assumed relationships, smaller rural schools generally do fare less well than larger urban schools. Among Missouri high school districts, for example, there is an average differential of 8 semester hours of college credit favoring teachers in AAA schools over those in A schools. The difference is wider for administrators with superintendents of AAA schools having an average of 12 semester hours more college work than those of A schools; the difference is wider among principals with an average difference of 23 hours between AAA and A schools (Missouri Department of Education, 1976).

These differences in factors known to be related to costs and assumed to be related to quality undoubtedly contribute to the continuing assumption of inferiority of the small school. Recently reported research on the relationship between class size and student achievement provides some important evidence (Cohen and Filby, 1979). The research of Glass and Smith integrates data from across approximately 100 studies exercising good experimental control. As a result they generate a curve showing a clear inverse relationship between class size and achievement test performance. A class size of 15 results in an achievement test percentile increase of 10 points over a class size of 40. Below 15 the curve accelerates sharply. The Glass-Smith data present evidence in the direction of an educational advantage for the small school and the small class sizes associated with the smaller school.

These apparent cancelling effects appear to be in operation in the wide range of studies reviewed by Sher and Tompkins (Sher, 1977). A conclusion that emerges from recent research is that when such critical factors as IQ and social class of the student are controlled, there is little if any evidence in support of the larger school producing superior students. If anything the direction of the relationship indicates an advantage for the smaller school.

Transportation: Transportation as demonstrated by various school cost studies is an important component of the education cost for the rural school. The inclusion of transportation costs in several studies reporting on rural schools reduces the size of school necessary for minimum cost operation to a few hundred (White and Tweeten, 1973, Holland and Baritelle, 1975). Even though the significance of transportation costs was great in those studies, they were completed prior to recent increases in energy costs. However, as late as 1978 fuel costs were found to represent only 20 percent of the costs of operation of school buses (Gerig, et al, 1978). Therefore, the impact of increased costs of energy may be more in terms of creating a sensitivity to alternatives to mass bus transportation more than major additional increments to overall costs.

Until very recently studies of costs of education have ignored opportunity costs or educational costs to the students as a result of spending significant time getting to and from school. Lu and Tweeten (1973) estimate for example that for an eighth grade student the educational cost for each hour per day spent bus riding would be predicted to reduce achievement test scores by four points. Gerig et al. (1978) list a set of presumed social costs associated with lengthy travel but do not measure these costs. Although there is not extensive research on the topic, existing data coupled with intuition suggests that time spent on a school bus is not likely to be productive.

The transportation issue pertaining to rural schools can be addressed by either (1) assuming schools will remain where they are and that the same extensity of travel will be required by students or (2) that increased energy costs and further evaluation of the optimum educational environment could lead to consideration of alternative locations for various educational functions. Under the first assumption alternatives could and are being evaluated. Present equipment and methods of routing tend to employ large capacity buses with poor fuel mileage, poor mobility and slow starting and stopping times to pick up children a few at a time (Gerig, et al., 1978). The use of feeder systems employing either lighter,

more mobile school vehicles or contracting with parents to use private vehicles to produce greater concentrations of children for pickup by larger capacity buses is but one of many alternatives being discussed.

Increasing cost of transportation relative to overall school budget may serve as a stimulus for examining the possibilities of decentralization of some school functions. Various new technologies, such as microprocessors, videotapes, etc., may contribute to lessening the need to assemble large numbers of students in a single location in order to be able to economically offer more advanced and specialized courses at a secondary level.

Financing: If, as described, there are significant inequities and differences in educational access and opportunity between sparsely populated rural areas and urban areas, the question inevitably becomes one of who is going to pay for their elimination, if indeed they become a matter of sufficient concern to become targets for elimination. Generally speaking they haven't up to this point. Federal expenditures for enhancement of rural services and rural development could, at best, be described as modest.[1] As described earlier, the prevailing strategy, either explicit or inferred, has been to facilitate the movement of people from areas of low employment and inadequate services to areas of presumed higher employment and more adequate services. As long as rural areas were declining in population and larger proportions of the rural population were the "people left behind," the political significance of rural areas was declining as well. Perhaps the new wave of reverse migrants will contribute to greater political visibility and an elevation of rural needs in the national set of priorities.

Financing of public education has traditionally been the responsibility of local communities and the states. That remains the case today. although the proportion of responsibility carried by the state in contrast to the locality has shifted significantly; from 17 percent in 1919-1920 to 42 percent 1976-1977 (Sher and Rosenfeld, 1979). Federal funding supplies about 9 percent of local school budgets but most of this is allocated for direct benefit of disadvantaged and therefore varies widely among the states, ranging from 23 percent in Mississippi to less than 4 percent for some other states (Sher and Rosenfield, 1979).

Since local communities still contribute nearly 50 percent of the cost of their schools, the sources of that 50 percent become important in considering the issue of equity. The property tax is a relatively regressive tax, particularly in rural localities where a characteristic of the low-income population is that they are typically "property owning poor." In consequence, lower-income rural people pay a much higher percentage of their income in property taxes than higher income poeple. Although these are wealth differences within all communities, rural

communities vary widely in the relative wealth of the community. As a result there are wealthy communities which can afford, if they choose, to invest as much as they wish in public education. By contract there are thousands of poor communities which simply do not have the tax base to support public services. Many states have produced legislation to address these inequities, but the differences still exist perpetuating inequities that persist across space.

In some respects, however, the above isuses are really chicken-and-egg questions. As has been emphasized before, education has not been as productive of eliminating inequalities as its champions contended (Bowles and Gintis, 1974). A major factor determining the life chances of youth remains the socio-economic status of their parents (Jencks, 1972, Cosby et al., 1979). A frequently voiced observation is that poor communities produce poor schools and, therefore, reduce the life chances of those who chose to be born there. The premise of that observation is undoubtedly correct; the conclusion is more questionable. Schools of poor communites need additional infusion of resources but both the schools and life chances of the students will more likely be improved by attacking the sources of poverty.

Rural Development and the Rural School

The purpose of this section is to briefly describe prevailing rural development strategies in the U. S. and some policy implications of these. Like the proverbial six blind men and the elepnant, rural development means different things to different people. Unless otherwise specified, however, rural development typically implies economic development or expanding the economic base of rural regions. However, if we take as a point of departure the extensive work done on quality of life in recent years, it is possible to discern two broad categories of rural development objectives: (1) economic growth and characteristics derivable from such growth and (2) what are termed subjective factors -- the quality of life of rural areas as a place to live irrespective of the level of income (Dillman and Tremblay). Measurement of these two general categories of rural development goals usually produces conflicitng results.

Income and everything that income translates into is, with few relatively isolated exceptions, lower in rural localities and regions. On the other hand, overall feelings of well-being tend usually to be higher in smaller communities

than larger ones although the differences in absolute terms are not great (Campbell et al., 1976). Speculation occurs on reasons for this discrepancy including offering the suggestion that many of the rural people "left behind" perceive no alternative for themselves and, therefore, rationalize their location in terms of intangibles associated with their rural residence. There are, however, objective differences which lead to some verification of the higher perceived value of the rural residence. For example, even though income tends generally to be low in rural areas, reported crime rates are also low -- the reverse of what is encountered in metropolitan areas. The current direction of population movement in the country tends to further reinforce the fact that there "seems to be something there." Lower-income neighborhoods in metropolitan areas are losing populations at a rapid rate while lower-income rural regions, such as the Upper Great Lakes, Ozarks, Appalachia, etc., are the regions experiencing some of the highest rates of in-migration (Beale, 1976).

Income differentials between rural and urban areas in the U. S. are relatively easy to explain in general terms. The urban areas are where the capital is -- both in terms of productive capacity and the human capital necessary to produce. The question for rural economic development put rather simply is how to get some of that capital back in rural areas or how to generate new capital within rural regions. Of the two, the former has been the most widely adopted strategy. Over the past ten years all but a very few rural communities have organized industrial development corporations charged with the responsibility of generating more jobs. To some extent this has worked (Beale, 1976). Industries in search of locational advantage or labor intensive industries in search of an ample labor supply at low wage rates have moved to rural areas.

Economic models intended to stimulate policies and programs oriented toward achieving rural economic growth have included emphasis on economic base analysis and regionalism (Braschler, 1971). Because it was generally found or assumed that rural communities were too small to be viable economic development and service centers, much emphasis on the 1960's and early 1970's was based on functional economic areas. The basic assumption was that, given the tranportation systems in existence and the cheapness of transportation, rural economic "communites" were multicounty areas with a "growth center" (either in fact, or to be developed) as the economic service and institutional center of the area. By directing public investment to such growth centers in the form of vocational-technical schools, community colleges, secondary care medical centers, regional offices of government, etc.,

the infrastructure would be created to attract other private investments and thus expand the economic base of the entire region. The smaller communities within the region would be the beneficiaries of "trickle down" benefits in the form of jobs, more accessible specialized services, etc.

The determinants of economic development in this context are described as being (a) supply, (b) demand, (c) space, (d) institutions and (e) technology (Edwards, Jansma and Goode, 1976). These determinants, although seldom taken into account simultaneously, are presumed to be the necessary components of an adequate economic development theory. A basic logic behind the regional approach concerns the probability that more of these factors (favorable to stimulating or attracting economic activity) will be found in a region than in any particular community within a region. Economic development then would occur as a result of economic activity increasing within a region and thus causing more income to flow into any particular economic space than flowed out (Braschler, 1973). As income flowed into an area it creates a demand for services, creating additional economic activity in the form of a multiplier effect.

During the 1950's and 1960's with the commercialization of agriculture the population of many of the smaller communities within these economic regions declined in size even though agricultural output increased thereby lessening the number of people demanding local community services.

A result was that many small town grocery stores, movie theaters, hardware stores, automobile dealerships, etc. closed their doors and joined the march of people to localities where the demand for services including labor was higher. Included in this trend as we have discussed were schools. The shifts that were taking place were both intra - and inter - with regard to the functional economic areas. It was a time when it was popular to ask whether small towns weren't dying as a form of social organization.

In this context economic space as included in the above model became a larger space facilitated by well developed transportation networks and inexpensive energy. The concept of community changed. I recall interviewing a farmer in the mid-sixties and asking him what he considered to be his community. He replied that:

> .... it depends--my children go to school in one town, we buy our farm supplies in another, we go to church in another and do most of our shopping in yet another town. Oh, yes, we go to the doctor and make major purchases in Des Moines (50 miles away). Which place do you want?

But despite all the forecasts of demise for the small town, they persisted, as often as not as a place to live rather than as the center of important economic and institutional activity. They became residential communities valued as a place to return after work. Commuting became a way of life as people accomo-

dated to the larger economic space. A recent survey of all open country residents in five counties in the Missouri Ozarks found that the average distance traveled to work for those who were employed away from home was 27 miles one way (Hobbs, Nolan et al, 1979).

For major parts of the country this direction of change began to reverse about ten years ago with extensive return migration to rural areas. This has been well documented by Beale (1975) and others who have found the trend to be pervasive. Counties classified as retirement counties lead the way in number of return migrants followed by counties having a college or university, followed by counties having experienced significant increases in manufacturing activity during the preceding decade and lastly those counties where farming is still the major component of the economic base. Important to this movement is that it seems unrelated to the relative income level of the area into which people are moving. Highly significant is the fact that many are bringing with them sources of income either in the form of transfer payments, or savings in the form of retirement programs, etc. (In addition, the average age of farmers is declining as more young people are moving into farming.) An apparent irony in this highly significant population shift is that recipient communities and counties seem not to be the "growth centers" but rather are the smaller towns and villages, many of which were given up as dying a decade before. As stated by Beale:

> .... a tabulation of the Census Bureau's estimates for 1973 shows non-metropolitan towns of 10,000 or more people increasing in population by little more than half the rate of the rest of the non-metropolitan population since 1970. This is consistent with the growth pattern for counties classed by size of largest place or by density and with the diminished rate of growth in non-metropolitan urban towns that was found in the 1960's. In many respects the non-metropolitan towns are experiencing in a micro way the same trends as metropolitan central cities; that is, there is a decay of the central business district, growth of suburban shopping malls, and a dispersal of people out into the surrounding countryside or villages .... In a very real sense the current trend in population distribution is one of renewed rural residential growth--open country and village. A majority of it occurs in counties that have no places of 10,000 people, and it is especially pronounced in counties that lack any town of even 2,500 (Beale, p. 957).

It may prove to be as shortsighted to draw long-term implications from this phenomena as it was to forecast the demise of the small towns of the country in the early 1960's but the trend does have important implications for rural economic development and in the context of this paper for the rural schools which serve these communities.

The above trends, although often linked to the movement of people who are relatively free from financial constraints (income not tied to place of residence) in making such moves, seem also to have influenced younger adults. In 1974 we interviewed 270 young adults who had dropped out of schools in a three-county area and were presently living in the school district from which they had dropped out. It was found that 46 percent of them had lived outside the county. They were about equally divided about whether those who had left the area were better off than themselves. A majority said that they had thought about leaving the area, but hadn't (Hobbs and Hobbs, 1979).

Although as emphasized earlier one should be cautious in generalizing to rural areas, the above trends seem to be general and are affecting significant parts of the country.

The implications of these trends are important. Given the centralization and consolidation of various services (especially medical, repair, etc.) into larger centers, population has moved into areas of scarcity of services. Again relying on data from the survey of five Ozark counties, it was found that mean distances traveled for various services ranged from 11 miles for groceries to 57 miles for specialized medical services (Hobbs, Nolan et al., 1979). Give this situation and the prospect (reality) of far more expensive energy prices, speculation can occur as to the probable consequences. One reasonable speculation might be that people will move again closer to existing services. That might occur but our data show that as an alternative ranking far down the list of possible responses of open country residents.

Another possibility, of course, is that services will move closer to people. It is likely that some of each will occur but the point important to this discussion is that it seems clear that there is a demand for services in many rural communities today which did not exist ten years ago and that this demand is generated by additions to the economic base of many rural communities.

The Rural School As An Agency for Rural Development?

Although, as we have discussed, the rural school has been an important con-

tributor to national economic growth, the most common view is to look at the school as a net consumer of resources generating long-term benefits, but not producing any immediate services to the community largely responsible for its support.

Within the frame of reference described above, our basic thesis is that important and useful educational experiences can be gained by students in the context of the rural community by producing and providing needed economic and non-economic services which contribute to improving the quality of life of the rural community in both the short and long run. An immediate reaction may well be to rebel at the impracticality of such a suggestion. We hope to demonstrate that such alternatives are not totally impractical and may produce real benefits to the student, community and school.

Data collection: Three ideas converge: It has been stated that a problem of the cirriculum of the rural school is that it lacks, at the least, locality relevance. It has frequently been stated that a major problem for rural communities is that they lack the data which are approriate, applicable and relevant to the local situation upon which to base decisions. We have stated as well that little emphasis in school programs is placed on students taking initiative, e.g. entrepreneurial training. The suggestion, therefore, is that with proper guidance and instruction students could become an important means of collecting and supplying those information needs. For example, in our above discussion we asserted that as a result of the reverse migration and greater sensitivity to more expensive energy, a demand was probably developing for additional services at a community level. That is an empirical question--in any particular community it has an answer. We contend that involving students in doing that type of economic feasibility study would be extremely instructive and would contribute to possibilities for expansion in the local economy.

Supplying needed community services: In our survey of businessmen in two Missouri Ozark counties, it was found that only 5 percent had ever made use of the regional employment offices as a source of employees. Their services were too far away and not sufficiently specific to local needs. On the other hand, nearly all interviewed said that their community could benefit from a local job placement service. It is perhaps possible again that two needs could converge. It has been stated that students tend to be quite ignorant of anything but the larger category employment opportunities within the community. If students were to take responsibility for collecting information on local jobs, career, occupational specialties,

etc., they could serve an important purpose in the career education program of the school. If at the same time students could staff a clearinghouse employment activity within the community it would seem to contribute to a community need as well as enhancing the relevance and experience of schooling.

School-based development enterprises: This concept has been advanced and described in detail by Jonathan Sher (1977). Perhaps the prime example is the emergence of Foxfire as an important cultural and economic activity out of what began as an oral history project of a rural school. The student feasibility studies described above could well become the first step in involving students in a process of discovering what kinds of social and/or economic activities are needed and capable of being supported. A necessary following step would be to determine what resources are required to begin such activities. It is probable that out of that student experience, some actual enterprises could be initiated. At least the range of possible alternatives for students become expanded in the process.

Contract vocational education: Some of the deficiencies of area vocational schools in meeting the needs of rural students were discussed above. A reason often given for not having more extensive vocational training offered in the rural school is that the equipment and instructional time are too expensive. In addition, as noted above, training offered to a number sufficient to justify the expenditure according to traditional teaching methods would result in almost immediate saturation of the local labor market. An irony with regard to equipment and instructional services is that most rural communities already have specialized equipment and trained personnel.

An alternative, therefore, having economic implications for the community and important training implications for the student is the idea of contract vocational education. This concept is now being experimentally tested within two communities in the Ozarks. It involves linking a student or small number of students interested in learning a particular skill with a person possessing that skill within the community. A contract is negotiated in which the businessperson/instructor identifies the costs involved (i.e., time, equipment costs, etc.) in training the student(s) to a specified level of proficiency. The concept differs from work experience or other similar programs in that the role of the employer is explicitly that of trainer or teacher rather than employer and the relationship is contractual, linked to certain performance standards and to payment for producing those standards. Among the many potential advantages of this approach are: (1) eliminating the need

for the school to invest in expensive training equipment/or hiring a full-time person for a limited training need; (2) the instruction taking place with a very limited number of students in any particular skill area reduces the possibility of exceeding the capacity of the local labor market; (3) the arrangement opens the door to a much broader range of occupations for which persons can be trained, including such areas as long distance truck operation, nursery worker, cattle buyer, newspaper photographer, flower shop management, etc., which typically are not offered in vocational schools, but represent good potential career opportunities; (4) the cost of instruction remains within the community.

Approaches such as those above are obviously not suitable for meeting the full range of vocational training needs of students even in rural communities. It is not a mass concept, but it is being evaluated to determine its feasibility and viability as a supplemental means of instruction, particularly adapted to the peculiarities of the economy of the rural community.

Use of community resources to supplement the educational program: A corollary of the contract vocational concept is the more extensive incorporation of community resource people into the instructional program of the school. This is being done widely now, but its potential for expansion seems quite great. Sometimes overlooked in discussions of the "educational extender" is the potential benefit to the "teacher". This is very often true of older people whose help and assistance is not often requested and who might be eager to help. Reference was made earlier to some of the achievement benefits associated with smaller class size. Most educators are probably intuitively convinced of the validity of those findings but also realize that it is financially not possible. To respond to that outside resource people could be used for "enrichment" for more advanced students while the regular teacher devotes more time to those having difficulty or vice versa. The possibilities are many.

The above are intended only to be illustrative of some possibilities for establishing a more effective interaction between school and community. Many similar approaches are being tried various places around the country.

In the short run at least the value of such approaches is more likely to be symbolic than substantive. It is important as well to emphasize that the economic space for such "rural development" is basically limited to the rural community.

If the kinds of approaches described above were to be seriously considered by rural schools immediate questions would arise concerning resource limitations. In the face of previous comments about the role of small school administrators and the

time constraints they face it is improbable that there would be a rush to adopt such organizationally "messy" approaches. Our own experience in working with three rural schools on some of the kinds of ideas described above has clarified our role in providing technical assistance, linkage to other forms of technical assistance and staff assistance in the form of grant writing, report making, etc.

Our work and the observations of others (Sturgis) suggest that rural schools provide a receptive climate for experimenting with a wide range of educational innovations. However, if experimentation is considered to be worthy of emphasis a basis for providing assistance will be required. Publication of papers is not likely to be sufficient.

The above can be looked at as rural development activities insofar as economic space is limited to the community. We contend that such a focus widely adopted would contribute to improving the quality of life of rural communities both in economic and subjective terms but we do not contend that those changes would contribute substantially to modifying the structure of inequality in America.

Throughout this paper we have emphasized the structural inequalities in the distribution of capital and productive capacities that exist between rural and urban America. Additionally, we have mentioned the historical process of capital depletion and transfer that fostered urban development and growth at the expense of rural America.

The alternatives offered herein are suggestions for improving the quality of life and life chances for rural members of our society and they are what one might call grass roots recommendations for contributing to alleviation of crucial inequities in contemporary America. However, we are cognizant of the fact that these suggestions can only have structural ramifications in a long-term historical sense. The regeneration of entrepreniurship, the strengthening of a sense of community, the new foundation of a link between school and community are all processes which in the long run could lead to the slowing of rural capital depletion and even over the long haul foster the regeneration of indigenous rural capital reserves.

But, such historical changes will be gradual and can only occur under social and political conditions that do not actively thwart the regeneration of rural potentials. If one realistically assesses the current political and economic structure, it is clear that any immediate gains in the relative position of rural America versus urban, demands either active and "bullish" voluntary movement of capital resources from urban to rural areas (which demands incentives for those

who control capital) and/or an aggressive set of governmental policies that are directed toward the redistribution of resources between rural and urban in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of opportunity and reward for all citizens.

The kinds of suggestions made in this paper can lead to an improved quality of life within the rural community, but if they are to contribute to the solution of larger structural inequities between rural and urban America, they will need to be linked to political and economic programs that address the nature of the economic system as a whole.

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